Hurricane Irene heads for eastern US

26 August 2011 - Latest forecasts show Hurricane Irene is expected to make landfall on the eastern coast of the United States on Saturday.

It is due to pass over North Carolina before continuing up the coast, passing over New York City about a day later.

Irene, the first hurricane of this year's North Atlantic tropical storm season, has already caused much destruction in the Bahamas with winds of up to 115 mph.

The Miami-based National Hurricane Center (NHC), is warning that Irene could bring 6-10 inches (150-250mm) of rain, with up to 15 inches (380mm) possible in places. It will also bring a powerful storm surge which could cause flooding in low lying areas.

Julian Heming, Tropical Prediction Scientist for the Met Office, said: "While Irene's strong winds have the potential to cause damage, it is the amount of rainfall combined with the storm surge which are most likely to cause disruption.

"Although there will be slow weakening, we are expecting Irene to remain a powerful storm as it travels north along the US east coast."

The Met Office is one of the key providers of hurricane forecast modelling to the NHC.

The latest location and forecast track of Irene can be viewed on the Met Office's StormTracker, a tool specifically designed to monitor tropical storms. It provides an interactive global picture of current storm activity to help quantify risk and aid decision making.

Travel advice relating to Hurricane Irene.

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